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1535 Commemoration of 1935

Four Hundred Years of the Printed English Bible

What the Bible Can Do for Us To-day

A Symposium

The Purpose of the Commemoration

To give thanks to God in private and public assemblies

—for His great gift of the printed Bible in our own tongue,

—for the sacrifices and labor of those through whom it has come to us,

—for its place in the life and heart of the English-speaking peoples for four hundred years;

To bring into our national and personal living at this critical time the great wholesome, moral and spiritual influences of the Bible

—by encouragement to the constant use of it by hundreds of thousands of readers new and old;

—by helping all who do not possess it to have it for their own—especially in America's homes.

Pamphlet No. 5

National Commemoration Committee

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Foreword

SIGNIFICANT *as are the historical elements in this Commemoration, there are other aspects of far more importance—to which, indeed, the historical elements testify. Some one sagely has said that a milestone was not made to sit on, but to show how much further one had to go! This pamphlet deals with the distance yet to go.*

For no one well aware of the life of the world today and sensitive to the great destiny of man shown forth in the Bible would deny that there are great areas of private character and of public affairs which terribly need the purifying power of the Bible's message. Step by step consciences of men and nations reach higher levels, but how easy it is for single groups, moved by selfish concerns, to threaten the peace, the livelihood, the life of millions! Even when there is good intent, how helpless we appear to be, on the basis of motives largely current in organized society, to assure justice, dissipate crime, and prevent economic disaster on a world-wide scale! That warm sense of brotherhood, that searching of our hearts, that redemption from plain sinfulness which the Bible demonstrably can bring, we desperately need. May this Commemoration set hundreds of thousands of persons to "search the Scriptures" and find the Way of Life!

No claim is made that the following pages will do more than stir thought upon "What the Bible Can Do for Us To-day." Several leading ministers and laymen have put down briefly the points which they would make if they were writing an article or making an address on the subject. Their several contributions are most gratefully acknowledged.

What the Bible Can Do For Us Today

I

WE ARE living in a confusion of tongues; many men are offering many contradictory solutions of the world's ills. We need to hear God speak. And the Bible gives us God's voice, in His own words, with His own divine and infallible solution for the world's ills as no other book ever possessed by men.

The Bible gives us divinely revealed origins and endings, showing us, as no human wisdom could, whence came man, society, creation; what is God's goal for the human race; and what is the ultimate fate of the saved and the lost. It is a Source Book of vital information, without which mankind is hopelessly in the fog.

It shows us God. Men could never find God by their own searching for Him. The Bible brings us the comforting message that God, therefore, has not left man to a hopeless search, but Himself seeks out man for his blessing and salvation. Only in the Bible do we learn that "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Because "no man hath seen God at any time," therefore the Son of God "hath declared him."

The Bible shows us ourselves. It is the only dependable mirror in which we can see ourselves as God sees us. It tells us the truth about ourselves; it does not flatter, but it discloses our desperate need of that which only God can give; and then it declares God's abundant provision for all our needs.

It shows us Jesus Christ, God the Son, who became man that the lost world might be saved. The greatest thing the Bible can do for us—and it does it in its sixty-six books, written by different men, living centuries apart—is to reveal Christ to us. He is the central theme of the entire Book; He is the only hope of a lost race and a lost world; He is the unique incarnation of God, the Wisdom and Righteousness of God, fully revealed and freely offered to all men by the Bible.

This Book tells us how to be saved. It brings us good advice; but it brings us something better and greater than good advice: good news. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is God's "Good News" for the whole world, and this is the message of the Bible; strength for the weak, hope for the hopeless, courage for the discouraged, light for those in the dark, salvation for the lost, life for the dead.

II

The Bible teaches *moral standards*. Mental development without moral standards is dangerous. The Bible stimulates the conscience, and defines prin-

ciples of right and wrong. It has regulated conduct among men, and law among nations. No other document throughout the ages has so created and constituted human justice, freedom, and character.

It informs as to *the past*. No one is thoroughly educated who is not familiar with God's dealings with humanity as recorded in the Bible. From the Patriarchs to the early church the record is given of man's successes or failures as he followed or evaded the precepts of Divine Revelation.

It strengthens *the will*. One of our contemporary essayists has well said "To educate the mind without training the will is a menace to society." The Bible unconsciously trains and stimulates the will, and thus forms character.

It stimulates *devotion*. Man needs his times of quietness and reflection. The instinct to devotion is a natural trait of humanity. The onrush of the world and selfishness destroy this tendency. The Bible refills and refreshens the mind, and arouses the soul. The man who can say "Oh, how love I thy law" will grow spiritually.

It stimulates *brotherly love*. Peace is not an outward condition, it is an inward state. When men and nations love one another and seek the good interests of others as well as their own, war and strife will cease. The Bible stimulates such feeling and awakens unselfish co-operation. The "Prince of Peace" is shown in all His loveliness and strength.

III

The Bible can set our human life in its right relations to God and to His government and save us from the futility and waste of trying to live life as it cannot be rightly and richly lived.

The Bible can acquaint us with the movement and meaning of human history which shows what courses of action and what attitudes on the part of individuals and nations end in disaster and what bring security and true success.

The Bible can introduce us to the springs of power in personality and of joy and strength in life.

The Bible is the great book of duty and it reveals the right and eternal principles of action and association.

The Bible is the only book which records the life and teaching and deeds of the Supreme Personality of history, Jesus Christ.

The Bible is the great book of origins and of destiny. It alone deals authoritatively with the two supreme questions—Whence and Whither.

IV

In an age of defeatism and frustration the Bible can restore our confidence in the integrity of the universe and of the moral order by which it is governed.

In an age of machines and machine-made civilization it can restore to us belief in spiritual causation and faith in the ultimate values, truth, beauty, goodness.

In an age of restlessness and feverish haste it can restore to us peace and serenity of spirit.

In an age of laxity and of lowered moral standards it can restore to us serious views of the meaning of life and conviction of moral accountability.

In an age in which exaggerated nationalism threatens to become a new idolatry it can restore to us belief in human brotherhood.

In an age in which belief in man has led to bankruptcy it can bring us back to what alone gives strength to human purpose, direction to human effort, and hope for humanity's future: belief in God.

V

The Bible is the book of Jesus, of the tallest figure in human history, of the most dynamic personality among the myriads of men who have moved across the pages of history.

Asked to name the six men who have most powerfully influenced the history of the world, a noted historian replied: "There are not six, there are only three, indeed there is but one. His name is Jesus of Nazareth."

It is not the theology of the Bible, nor its philosophy, nor its literature, nor its history, nor its morals, that constitute its supreme value. It is its religion. It is not merely its religion; it is its Christian religion.

He has not discovered the Bible who has stopped with the text. There is something in it that was never written by man; a supernatural quality which gives to those who experience it, the life everlasting. It is this which makes it "the Word of God."

VI

The Bible can recreate the sense of historic values. The age in which we live is strangely indifferent to historic conceptions of life. It is enamoured of the contemporaneous. And yet the present cannot be understood without a careful analysis of its relation to the past. The Bible is the keenest analysis of the motives and spiritual movements which have swept humanity in other days. We need it today to make us sensitive to ageless truths.

The Bible can portray the basic weaknesses of human life. The sins and foibles of our generation bear striking similarity to those of ancient times. The story of the Garden of Eden is amazingly modern. The weaknesses to which human nature is victim are analyzed, brilliantly described, and courageously followed through in the words of the Scriptures.

The Bible can portray the glories of triumphant human character. The Bible not only records the temptations before which men fell, but the faith by which they conquered. No more thrilling story can be found in human history than the triumphs of the Cross, a world revolution wrought by the sheer power of contagious goodness.

The Bible can point the pathway to the discovery of God. Our generation stands pitifully in need of a fresh experience of God. But it can never find it along the ways of humanism and egoistic self-satisfaction. The old paths are the surest and best. The road that leads through repentance, faith, and acceptance, and high endeavor is still the road that leads into the knowledge of the Divine.

VII

THE BIBLE CONFRONTS THE WORLD

That the Bible consists of many documents written by many different persons, in many different centuries, in many different situations, we all know. And this knowledge, fascinating and important as it is, tells us precisely nothing as to the Bible's *secret*. However we explain it, the really decisive matter is this: the Bible is in some sort an intellectual and moral and spiritual organism. All its varied elements together express one message, and it is this message which transforms individuals and creates civilization.

The tragedy of Biblical study lies in the fact that it is possible to say about the Bible so many things which are true, but irrelevant to the main contention. And the main contention is this: the Bible is the record of God's revelation of Himself to men; it is not the record of man's painful quest for God.

No doubt that revelation has been conditioned by no end of psychological features. No doubt it has been characterized by no end of patient adjustments to man's slowly growing capacity. But for all that it is not the record of man's trying to find God. It is the record of God's word to men. And that record, beginning with words, ends in a person, beginning with "Thus saith the Lord," ends with the Word made Flesh. The Bible is the record of God's great adventure in making Himself known to men, first in the luminous speech of the prophets, and at last in the person and work of Jesus.

Once this is realized we understand that we do not judge the Bible. The Bible judges us. We do not test its message. The message tests us. It is by its power of moral and spiritual judgment that the Bible has made its place all through these centuries. It is only by a perpetual reassertion of that power of

moral and spiritual judgment that it can maintain its place in the centuries to come.

Every failure of men's interesting formulas for the integration of life drives men back to that central message of moral authority and suffering love which masters the intelligence, captures the conscience, and dominates the will of responsive men. Once settle this central matter and a thousand delightful results follow. The many-sided life of man is interpreted by the many-sided literature of the Bible. The poetic spirit confronts supreme poetry. The artistic sensibility confronts exquisite artistry. Social passion confronts social vision. Nothing is foreign to this volume of flashing and exhaustless insights. But all this is a by-product of the central matter! God has spoken in human words! God has become articulate in human life in the Word made Flesh! In a fresh perception of these things will be found a renaissance of the power of the Bible in the world.

VIII

The Bible is to the intelligent Christian what the chemistry manual is to the college student. It shows people how to reproduce *for* and *in* themselves the great religious discoveries of Christians. St. Francis and his experimentation with Matthew, Chapter 10, is an example.

The Bible is the place to discover how a *trust in God* as He is revealed in Jesus Christ brings about an unmistakable change in the personality of the individual. He thinks and acts in terms of the needs of others. He uses his money for the welfare and not for the hurt of men. He uses his power over men for the common good and not for his own selfish ends. This is brilliantly brought out in the explanation of repentance by John the Baptist in Luke 3:1–14.

The Bible is the place to discover how the ongoing of righteousness in the race is dependent upon the *co-operation of changed people* with the creative God. This changed man becomes like the creative God. Then the creative God and the creative man become co-operators in creating and in conserving moral values. This is seen most clearly in the Old Testament prophets.

The Book of Genesis is the place to look for four great fundamental ideas which ought and must be at the basis of all clear human thinking:

1. Back of all creation is a personal and purposive God.
2. The crowning piece of His creation is man.
3. This man is *free*—he can say *no* to his Creator.
4. This creative God is friendly and stands by man in his use of his freedom and enables him to become a creator co-operating with God in building the society beautiful.

The Bible is the perennial corrective for the thinking of people. Especially is this true touching the various interpretations of history which are current today. The Bible insists that man is more than an *economic animal*. It insists

that history is not the exhibition of ever recurring cycles of the birth, growth, maturity, and decay of nations. It insists that history is not the "inevitable flowering out of the infinite." It insists that the race is not certainly bound to develop involuntarily into the good, the true, the beautiful. The Bible teaches from Genesis to Revelation that God, in co-operation with changed men, is busy building in and for the race the Kingdom of God on earth. It insists that this Kingdom is meant to be race-wide and that its coming is slowed up or accelerated by man himself, depending upon his willingness to accept from God *as a gift* the equipment which he must have to enable him to make his contribution.

The Bible enables men to see that man is capable of the most disastrous behavior. It discovers that this is due to man's unwillingness to live in accordance with the moral law. Unless man is willing to acknowledge himself a willing breaker of the moral law, there is no hope that he can himself become beautiful in character nor that he can build safe and constructive institutions. Once man confesses his sins, there comes from God to man a sense of forgiveness and an enabling power which revolutionizes man's character and sets him to work with power and enthusiasm in building personal character and wholesome institutions. It is the consciousness that God is love which stimulates man to effect this change.

IX

The following are some of the innumerable values that the Bible has for our day, if it is read and studied according to some progressive, thoughtful, reverent plan and in a teachable, obedient spirit—

Such reading will restore to us the timeless elements in our thinking. We need, in every generation, to get away from purely modern conception of truth and to see life "sub specie aeternitatis." Bible study will give invaluable help at this point.

Such reading will show us how God has spoken to men across the centuries by widely varied means and through some very strange and curious persons. This should help us to be alert to hear Him speak in our time—usually in the quiet voice.

The Bible gives us the record of great lives—lives that have without disguising their faults and shortcomings won out in life's battle. We can see here why men fail as well as succeed—in the light of eternity.

In the New Testament we find the one original source of the interpretation of the life and teachings of Jesus by the disciples who lived and talked with Him in the flesh. Here, too, exclusively, we find the light which Paul, whom many consider the greatest interpreter of our Lord, focuses upon the direct teachings of our Lord and their implications for daily life. In the Bible alone we can find the record of the one life that fully expressed God in human terms. It will bring to us not only His clear teachings, but will paint an adequately clear picture of His living person.

There is no source of encouragement and stimulus to heroic patience like reading the records of men and women in the Old and New Testaments. Here one discovers not only life's chief end, but also how that goal is achieved.

X

Constant and reverent reading of the Bible will make for nobility of sentiment and expression. The cheap, the vulgar, and the flippant will become more and more distasteful.

The student of the Bible who is concerned with the present day problems will find in the Biblical history situations parallel with those of today. From the attitudes of men of the past and from the outcome of such situations he may derive wisdom to deal with like problems.

Points of view found in the Bible and arguments for those views, statements of principles, ethical and spiritual truths, never better formulated, have their value for today.

The Bible reader can not help taking a long view of history. He will not expect immediate vindications of the right. He will be patient with men and with evolution. He will view all events *sub specie aeternitatis*.

Righteousness will take a more and more prominent place in his thought. He will find it more important than success. He will seek for rightness both in end and in means.

The Christian reader of the Bible will be constantly challenged by the comparison between prevailing standards and the ideals of Jesus.

XI

The Bible is the sole source of historical material with which every educated person ought to be acquainted.

It matters not what one's attitude toward Christianity and Judaism may be, these movements have figured so prominently in the history of the world that no one can justly claim to have a liberal education who does not know the main facts recorded in the Old and New Testaments. Not to know the Bible is to be ignorant of two great forces in the modern world.

The Bible contains literature of a high order—literature that has a universal appeal.

The Book of Job is by common consent one of the world's great literary masterpieces. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Psalms have also a unique literary value. Then, too, these are stories in the historical books, utterances of the Prophets, the parables of Jesus, and passages in the Epistles that are literary gems.

The English Bible is one of the great English classics.

Merely as an example of simple, pure, dignified English it is worthy of careful study.

Many of the masters of English have confessed their profound indebtedness to the English of the Bible.

The Bible teaches us the language of devotion as does no other book.

We are all to some extent religious people. At least, we have our devotional moments, and in the Bible we have the classic expression of these moments or moods. No one in a Christian land can express satisfactorily his religious needs and aspirations without drawing on the language of Scripture.

The Bible is an unparalleled source of moral inspiration.

To illustrate this fact one need but recall the prophets, apostles, and other heroes of Biblical history, especially the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. The Bible proclaims to us the Word of God.

Here we have a value that transcends all historical, literary, and ethical values. In the Bible God speaks to us as He does nowhere else. He unveils His face to us, so that in the light of His countenance our own life is transfigured, and duty and destiny come to have a meaning they never had before. The Bible is "the lamp that hangs from the arched roof of the sanctuary to give light to those who are seeking God."

XII

There is to-day an ebb-tide in the spiritual life of the world. The lack of its strong currents is widely recognized. Even the politicians are using the phrase "the more abundant life" as the goal of their "many devices." Our deepest need is to discover anew and to appropriate our supreme resource, the power of the Spirit of God in the hearts of men.

From the record of Genesis—the Spirit moving upon the face of the waters, to create a new world—to Revelation with its appeal to men to "hear what the Spirit saith," the Bible, and the Bible alone, urges this lesson. The ministry of Jesus began with the words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me." Only when the promise of Jesus, "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit shall come upon you," was fulfilled, could the message of His Kingdom give new life to the world. Only as men realize their necessity of possessing "the mind of the Spirit," which is "life and peace," can they find solution for the problems of daily living. Only as the Spirit of God comes upon the face of the troubled waters of our social, industrial, national, international life, can the new world appear out of our present chaos.

We need not only new programs, new deals, new methods—for "the life is more than meat"—but a new recognition of the fact of a life in the Spirit, so constantly taught in the Word of God, and a seeking for that life for ourselves and our world. Let us turn the pages of the Bible with that intent. Let us "search" the words of Jesus, which are not merely beautiful phrases, but essen-

tial truth of profoundly practical import for to-day. So shall His promise be fulfilled to us, "The Holy Spirit shall teach you all things."

Only so will the ebb-tide of our life turn—the fresh currents of spiritual power sweep into the little, stagnant pools of our personal lives—and lift the ships of our endeavor forward on their voyage of "recovery." Until that day men will indeed say, "the struggle naught availeth." Only so can we attain "the life more abundant," which is "the life of God in the soul of man."

"For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Come silent, flooding in, the main."

XIII

The Bible can give us the wholesome pleasure of reading good literature. In simpler form than modern literature, but with all the qualities that make writing great in any age or language, the stories and poems and letters and sermons of the Bible make interesting reading. The fact that they come from a distant country and a bygone time gives them at times something of the character of the Arabian Nights; other parts are more like Homer's epics, while still others preserve the simple conversation and correspondence of everyday life.

The Bible can help us to understand human nature in ourselves and in others. Its frank, clear pictures of character and inner motives show human nature as it is. The very distance in time and space between us and the ancient Hebrews and early Christians only brings out the fundamental unity of man's thinking, feeling, and behavior. In Jacob, David, Paul, Esther, or Ruth we can see ourselves and our fellows, or what we should aspire to be, or what we must beware of becoming.

The Bible can help us to understand many practices and ideals of our present social order by showing us their roots and how they came to be. Our civilization is largely based upon the Bible. Many of our customs and conceptions, to be sure, are very different from those of the Hebrews, but others, which have been handed down to us without our knowing why, owe their existence, indirectly or directly, to the fact that the Bible has been the Sacred Book of our ancestors for many centuries.

The Bible can correct and elevate our ideals and our faith by its strong and noble expression of the noblest faith and ideals ever given to man. When life becomes almost too much for us, and our faith and hope grow weak or we are tempted to lower our ideals and be conformed to this world, the high, clear challenge of the Bible helps us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The Spirit within bears witness, and our consciences respond, "Yes, after all, that must be so!"

The Bible can help us to live worthily through the inspiration of the great examples it sets before us. Confronting the heroes and heroines of the faith, and most of all the Son, who was well pleasing to the Father and who was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, we are ashamed of our unworthiness and encouraged to press on toward the goal for the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.

XIV

James Denny, of Glasgow, once said that the New Testament was the most astonishing outburst of intellectual and spiritual energy the world has ever known. If that is true, and it certainly is, then contact with the New Testament and with the great writings that prepared for it, vitalizes the mind. Said Jesus, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." "Did not our hearts burn within us," said the disciples, "while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" They meant two things by that. First, their emotions were aroused; and second, a swarm of new ideas and suggestions rose up in their minds.

The Bible, if persistently studied, gives us a healthy emotional tone. Cigarettes, liquor and exciting picture shows are all of them attempts of people in depressed emotional conditions to put a little thrill into life. The Bible, beyond all question of doubt, if persistently used, gives a man an inward glow. "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." No one who has lived with spiritually minded Bible students and has noted the light in their eyes after a time with the Holy Scriptures, can doubt this for a moment. The Psalmist was not using forced rhetoric when he said, "Thy words are sweeter than honey, yea, and the honey comb."

We do not half realize the therapeutic value of the Psalms. A Christian nurse recently said to the writer, "I find the Psalms which I have in memory wonderfully efficacious in putting my nervous and troubled patients to sleep." Let a person master—in addition to the 23rd Psalm that every one knows—such Psalms as the 27th, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" and the 46th, the earthquake Psalm, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;" and the 91st, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Let a man fill his memory with these Psalms, so that they come to him without effort. Let him get into the habit of spraying his mind in every morbid or depressed mood with these great assurances, and he is vaccinated against many a form of mental disease. The president of a large college said that 33% of his students had some kind of neurosis. How wonderful it would be if in their moods of adolescent depression they by previous training could have had these splendid remedies at hand! This is a form of autosuggestion that has a solid basis in reality, for in addition to autosuggestion which their use surely is, they are also divine suggestions. They suggest to us ultimate and eternal reality.

But, of course, the supreme use of the Bible is to give to us anchorage amid the moral besetments and asphyxiation that we breathe in, in this irreligious and godless age. The Psalms are a gas mask against immoral standards that prevail. But again in order to be useful we must not merely have ready the Scriptures, but have domesticated them. It will not do to have the Bible as a kind of fire plug which we are supposed to use in emergencies, but to which we never go for a drink of water or to wash our hands. At the crisis we are apt not to have the wrench that opens the fire plug. This means that children ought to be constantly familiarized with the Bible by having it read daily in the home and especially expounded on the Lord's Day.

The purpose of the Bible is not to straitjacket us, but set us free. "If ye continue in my word," said Jesus, "then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." The Bible is a book which does two things apparently contradictory. It enfranchises the mind and delivers us from the slavery of religious convention and etiquette, and iron-bound form, but at the same time vaccinates us against trying experiments that all through the ages fools have ventured on to their destruction. It is the deposit of the religious experiments of millenniums and tells us what we must assume as the basis for future explorations. It, at the same moment, seems to say, "Hold to the old paths" and "explore the unknown."

Finally, the Bible is wholly free from any disposition to sweep religious difficulties under the lounge. It puts none of its skeletons into the closet, but sets them on the mantel piece and bids us take a long look at them. The Bible is unafraid of the most critical thing that can be said against it. Indeed it expresses for us doubts in the most vivid possible fashion. We shall never be able to express the objections to the fundamental position of the Bible with the vigor with which the Bible itself phrases them. Look at the Psalms: "O Lord, how long wilt thou forget me for ever? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble? For what vanity has thou created all the children of men?"

XV

The Bible illuminates and vitalizes one of the great cultural heritages of our modern world. As a literature of classic proportions, it reflects the genius and greatness of our Hebrew-Christian heritage as no other literature. It steers us into one of the great streams of which we are still inevitably a part.

The Bible can give men fortitude and steadiness of vision and faith in a time when traditional cultural categories are shifting and dissolving. To a rootless generation it speaks of the eternal and permanent. It is concerned throughout with the same dominant problems which face life wherever it is seriously lived in our own day. The unit of divine interest is almost everywhere a *society*, and this society gains its solidarity by its radical relationship to God. In Hebrew prophecy, God is everywhere the source of authority for prophetic criticism of the injustice of the social order. Justice, good will, and love are not merely desirable social attitudes. They are the commands of God by which man's life is defined.

The Bible is unexcelled as a literature for the teaching of religion. It raises in extremely illuminating historical contexts many of the major questions of the thoughtful religious student. The dominant questions of religion emerge inevitably out of social and historical contexts. Religious values are won in the Bible as they are always won in life, through patience and conflict and suffering. The records of Moses and Elijah and Hosea and Isaiah and Jeremiah all reflect this dynamic character of religious discovery.

The Bible more than any other literature which I know reflects the tremendous vitality of religion by always relating itself to the sphere of actual history. The Old Testament pre-eminently is a literature born out of the exigencies and crises of national and international life. The prophetic interest in the Old Testament, which is its most magnificent feature, develops throughout a period of national decline and disintegration. The interplay of ethical and religious values with the values of culture and civilization constitutes one of the challenging interests for our time.

The greatness of the Bible for us today is clearly apparent when one considers the purity of its religious interest. This is reflected in the tremendous sense of the reality of God which pervades it from beginning to end. One cannot define it satisfactorily in terms of our habitual categories of experience, mysticism, etc. All life is quickened by its relationship to God.

In personal religious living, the Bible can today speak to us as clearly and inspiringly as it has ever done. Its imperatives break in upon the lives of all of its great figures from beginning to end. Men are everywhere placed under the urgency of God's command, and throughout the history of the Bible, where men have taken it seriously as Scripture, they have so come under the influence of this pervasive characteristic that their own lives have been challenged and constrained by it. I do not believe that the specific cultural forms in which the records of the Bible are couched prevent it from continuing to be a source of power in the lives of all men who will go to it seriously, above all, to those of us in the modern world who are heirs of its great heritage.

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